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Crash Ends Promising Future of Lawyer-Pilot

Piazza Ex-Garrison Aide Who Loved Flying

By ARTHUR ROAME

George Piazza II, through his native ability, work and a cheerful acceptance of responsibility, had a future almost any man of 30 would envy.

Probably there are few men at that age who hold a law legree with high honors, then turn to a demanding unrelated career, that of pilot for a major airlines.

George Piazza II did both and was pleased, in his quiet and winning way, that he had the opportunity to follow his biggest interest—flying.

However, the early Thursday morning crash of a Delta Airlines DC-8 snuffed out his life.

He was good looking and well groomed and had the relaxed and friendly air of assurance that showed he'd succeed in most anything he attempted.

EX-GARRISON AID

George was "the most likely to succeed" type and if he had been president of his class, its leading scholar and also holder of a varsity letter, it wouldn't be surprising.

About three years ago he was an assistant in District Attorney Jim Garrison's office and most recently was on the other side of the legal fence.

He represented James Lewallen, a former roommate of the late David William Ferrie.

Garison says that Ferrie was one of a group of men who plotted here to assassinate President Kennedy.

George was an assistant D. A. for about a year or less and worked on investigations of home improvements rackets which were successfully prosecuted.

He showed a Times-Picayune reporter a long story in The Wall Street Journal on home icprovements and interest rates abuses in other parts of the country and in several conversations said this would bear investigating in New Orleans.

WERE SURPRISED

But in late 1964 or early 1965 he prepared to leave the DA's office, take some training in Atlanta and then fly as a pilot for Delta Airlines.

Some people acquainted with him were surprised.

"It's really what I want," Piazza said with his sincere smile, when questioned. "Law is okay but often the routine gets boring. Flying doesn't. I really miss flying since I left the Air Force and want to fly professionally.

"There's a big need for qualified pilots, Delta wants me and I want to go with them, so that's it."

He was elated over this opportunity and said he hoped to fly for Delta for a number of years, perhaps until he was 45 or more.

Piazza had qualified as a flight engineer and co-pilot aboard Delta prop jets about two years ago and early this year went to Delta's "pure jet" school in Atlanta.

GEORGE PIAZZA II

ADDED TRAINING

He underwent six to eight weeks of training there and was in additional training and qualifying when the tragedy occurred in Kenner.

Among Piazza's survivors are his widow Deanna, several children, his uncle, Atty. George Piazza and singer Marguerite Piazza, a cousin.

He was asked about his future law practice at the time he decided to go with Delta.

Piazza said, "Well, with the Delta job I'll take only the cases that really appeal to me. And this means I can pass up the dull, routine ones that most lawyers have to handle to keep the income roling in."

The reporter made a comment about making the best of two worlds, and Piazza smiled, characteristically tilted his head a little and remarked, "I guess I'm kind of lucky."

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